

Town of Poolesville
To: Town Commissioners and Parks Board
From: Niles Anderegge, Assistant Town Manager
CC: Wade Yost, Preston King, John Strong
Date: 9/1/2023
Re: Fisher Avenue Speed Analysis

Background

Based on Resident concerns about speeds on Fisher Avenue, the town installed speed radar signs on Fisher Ave. One is located near Dollar General and covers eastbound traffic. The other is located near the house of Poolesville and covers westbound traffic. These signs indicate the speed of vehicles as they approach the signs. Town Staff selected these locations due to their proximity To the mid-block crosswalks, where there's been the greatest concern for pedestrian safety. Previously, the Commissioners have discussed data from the Montgomery County Police Department.

Data

The speed indicator signs were installed at the end of May, so we have collected almost 3 months of data. This study will review speed data for both Eastbound and Westbound traffic and the traffic volumes in each direction. For those three months, there was a total volume of 341,507 westbound trips and 350,358 eastbound trips. The Average speed in both directions was around the speed limit for westbound traffic was 22.96 MPH, and for eastbound traffic, it was 25.15 MPH. The max speed observed in each direction was 63 MPH. The speed limit for this road is 25 miles per hour.

Analysis

The town's data is consistent with the previous county data, which showed no significant speeding problem on Fisher Ave. For example, the 85th percentile speed westbound is 29.25 MPH and 30.32 MPH, respectively, which is well below the standard used for speedbumps of 10 MPH over the speed limit. Most vehicles (57%) went between 21 and 30 miles an hour, and 90% of cars went between 6 and 30 miles per hour Westbound. Eastbound is similar, with 86% of the vehicles traveling between 6 and 30 miles per hour and an even greater percentage (67%) between 21 and 30 miles per hour. One thing that is clear from the data is that speeds are greater on the eastbound side. For example, only 30% of Westbound traffic went between 25 and 30 miles an hour vs. 37% for Eastbound traffic.

The traffic volume was significant for both directions, with 3925.4 westbound Average daily trips and 4073.9 eastbound average daily trips. Traffic volume is consistent throughout the week, with the largest drop-off being on Sundays. Like the speed data, the volume data also shows a difference between eastbound and westbound traffic, with just under 150 more eastbound trips than westbound trips.

These differences in speed and volume between eastbound and westbound traffic can be attributed to the location of Poolesville Elementary, as many westbound trips would end before the speed sign at the school, and the best route for many residents going east to the school

would be to go down Fisher. Similarly, the slightly lower speeds in the westbound data are likely related to cars slowing down through the school zone before they get to the speed sign.

Next Steps

Based on the data gathered, staff is taking the following actions. Since we have these speed-radar signs, we will conduct future studies and collect quarterly data. This will allow us to look at the data over time and see if future patterns emerge. Second, we will ask the county to perform more speed studies, especially of the areas outside the school zone and west of Elgin, to see what volumes and speeds we are getting into the town center area. Lastly, Staff has installed signs on Fisher Ave near the crosswalks, but these are consistently getting hit; staff is looking into alternatives to remind drivers to slow down and stop when pedestrians are at these crosswalks.